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A Message To The American People

BY

CATHERINE BRESHKOVSKY

"The Grandmother of the Russian Revolution"

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"Flooded with tears and blood, Russia moans and cries out to the world. She is a living body, and her tortures cannot be looked upon cold-bloodedly as an extraordinary, never-before-witnessed experiment in social evolution. She is alive, and every pore of her body is shedding blood."—*Catherine Breshkovsky.*

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Introduction by

GEORGE KENNAN

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PUBLISHED BY THE

Russian Information Bureau in the U. S.

WOOLWORTH BUILDING

NEW YORK CITY

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Catherine Breshkovsky.

(*From her latest photograph*)

Introduction

I first heard the name of Catherine Breshkovsky thirty-four years ago in eastern Siberia. At Irkutsk, where I stopped for a few days on my way to the mines of the trans-Baikal, a political exile whose acquaintance I there made said to me:

"You must not fail to stop in Selenginsk on your way eastward and make the acquaintance of Madame Breshkovsky. She was one of the early revolutionary workers; was the first woman to be sent to the mines for a political offense, and has already been in prison or in exile more than ten years. She is a lady of character and cultivation and you **must** see her, because she can tell you many things that you ought to know."

Four weeks later I arrived in Selenginsk from Kiakhta, found my way to the wretched log house in which Madame Breshkovsky was living, and presented myself as an American traveler engaged in making a study of Russian prisons and the exile system. In describing this meeting afterward in the "Century Magazine," I said:

"She was a lady perhaps thirty-five years of age, with a strong, intelligent, but not handsome face, a frank, unreserved manner, and sympathies that seemed to be warm, impulsive and generous. Her face bore traces of much suffering, and her thick, dark, wavy hair was streaked here and there with gray; but neither hardship, nor exile, nor penal servitude, had been able to break her brave, finely tempered spirit, or to shake her convictions of honor and duty. She was, as I soon discovered, a woman of much cultivation, having been educated first in the women's schools of her own country, and then at Zurich, in Switzerland. She spoke French, German and English, was a skillful musician, and impressed me as being in every way, an attractive and interesting woman. She had twice been sent to the mines of Kara—the second time for an attempt to escape from forced colonization in the trans-Baikal village of Barguzin—and after serving out her second penal term had again been sent as a forced colonist to this wretched, God-forsaken village of Selenginsk."

As she talked to me about the aims and purposes of the revolutionary party and about her hopes for the future of her country, I was impressed, first, by her patriotism and her love for the Russian people; second, by her unshakable confidence in the final outcome of the struggle for freedom in which she was engaged, and, third, by her absolute unselfishness and her constant thoughtfulness for the welfare and happiness of others. She wasted no time in complaints of the injustice from which she herself had suffered, or the hardships and privations that she personally had endured. All these things she seemed to regard as nothing more than a part of the day's work; but when the sufferings of her people or friends were in question, her deepest emotions seemed to be touched. As a characteristic illustration of this disregard of self and thoughtfulness for others, I may mention the fact that when, just before we parted, I told her that I was on way to the east-Siberian mines, she went through her scanty personal possessions in search of something that she could send by me to the women at Kara, whose environment was more intolerable and whose needs were even greater than her own. She could find nothing that seemed likely to be of use to them except two or three teacups and a hand mirror; but as these were not enough to go around among the four or five women who had been her friends and fellow prisoners at Kara, she added to them a small red feather duster, which would not perhaps be particularly serviceable at the mines in winter, but which she desired me to give, with her best love, to her "dear friend, Nathalie Armfeldt." All of those women have long been dead; but at least, before they died, they were cheered and comforted, in the dreary monotony of penal servitude, by the pathetic tokens of remembrances and love that I carried to them from Selenginsk.

This trivial incident would not perhaps be worth mention if it were not indicative of the never-failing thoughtfulness for others which Madame Breshkovsky has invariably shown throughout the whole of her long and eventful life. It is the key-note of her character. When I bade her good-bye in Selenginsk I did not expect ever to see her again; but I felt conscious that my few hours' talk with her had raised my standards of courage, fortitude, unselfishness and patriotism for all time.

In 1896, when Madame Breshkovsky's term of banishment ended, she returned to European Russia and secretly carried on revolutionary work there until 1904, when she made a first visit to the United States. She was enthusiastically received here, made many warm personal friends, and carried back with her more than ten thousand dollars, which had been contributed by Russians and Americans who sympathized with the struggle for freedom in which she and her associates were engaged.

In 1908, she was again arrested, and after more than a year in solitary confinement in a casemate of the Petropavlovski fortress, she was again sent to the remotest part of Siberia. There, in various sub-arctic settlements, from Yakutsk to Minusinsk, she spent eight more years of hardship and privation. But she never once complained, lost hope, or failed in courage. Her letters from Kirensk to her friends in America, which have been published by Alice Stone Blackwell, show that even in loneliness, suffering and failing health, she was not only brave and cheerful, but was constantly thinking or working for the welfare of other exiles whose situation was even worse than her own. In 1916, when she had passed her seventy-first birthday and when both health and eyesight were failing, she wrote to one of her American friends a cheerful. almost buoyant letter, in which she said: "I feel equal to my age and all odds!" It was the triumphant confidence of an indomitable spirit. Health might fail, and eyesight might go; but she was "bigger than anything that could happen to her" and her weakening body was steadfastly upheld by her unconquerable soul.

At last, in 1917, after thirty-one years of imprisonment or exile, she was finally set free by the overthrow of the government of the Tsar. She immediately returned to Petrograd, where, of course, she was welcomed with boundless enthusiasm and devotion, not only by her old revolutionary associates, but by the whole Russian people. It seemed, for a time, as if all the hopes and anticipations of her life were about to be realized; but, unfortunately, the Bolsheviki soon usurped the authority of the Constituent Assembly, and established a form of government which was even worse than the autocratic and bureaucratic despotism that she had

been trying all her life to overthrow. She fought the Bolsheviki as long as she could, but eventually, with Kropotkin, Burtsef, Tchaikovsky, and most of her old revolutionary associates, she had to go into hiding to escape from a tyrannical system of misrule which, at best, can only be described as democracy gone mad.

Now, in her old age, but with mind as clear and judgment as sound as ever, she has come a second time to the United States, for the purpose of getting help in what she calls "the fight against the mischiefs of war and Bolshevism;" a fight to which, as she says in a recent circular letter, she intends to devote the remainder of her life.

One of the chief "mischiefs of the war," from her point of view, is the removal by death of the parents of four million dependent children; and it is, primarily, for the support and education of these helpless orphans that the following appeal to the American people is made. If we feel grateful admiration, as we must, and do, for the courage and self-devotion of the men and women who went to Europe to defend France and bind up the wounds of Belgium, but who spent comparatively a short time in the field, we certainly should not fail to render a tribute of admiration and gratitude to this heroic woman, who, in the most disheartening circumstances, has also been carrying on a fight for liberty and justice, and who has been almost constantly in the field for half a century.

Catherine Breshkovsky is still "equal to her age and all odds;" but we can lessen a little the "odds" against her by joining in her fight against Bolshevism, and by helping her to rescue from destitution and ignorance the four million orphan children whose urgent needs have touched her warm and loving heart.

George Kennan

A Message to the American People

by

Catherine Breshkovsky

I

THERE are two reasons, my dear, beloved friends, why I consider it my duty to speak aloud and openly about the affairs of Russia, about the conditions our country is living through in this critical hour of her history, and about her greatest needs in this hour.

The first reason is that Russia, although the most backward in her culture, has rendered such great services to Europe, and therefore to the whole world, that she deserves the full attention of all her friends and Allies. For many centuries Russia served, and still serves, as a barrier defending Europe against the raiding forces of Asia. By a great price, the price of her own blood and progress, Russia guarded the might and the culture of the European peoples. She withstood with her own back the incessant shocks of wild invaders, and for centuries was obliged to concentrate her forces only for self-defense, for the preservation of her independence and safety. Russia had hardly the time to fortify her position in the East, before Europe itself began to hit her, and blow after blow fell on her shoulders again and again. Twelve different nations sent their forces under the leadership of Napoleon the First, to destroy and conquer Russia. Our large country saw her cities ruined, her villages burnt, her treasures robbed.

A century passed. Russia rose up and entered the family of peoples who struggle towards freedom and light. But, it was not fated that our people should rest, should be left to work for themselves. A treacherous, merciless war, the work of her neighbor, awaited Russia, and during five years Germany has tyrannized our country in concert with her allies,

the treacherous Bolsheviki. Material poison, moral, spiritual poison—all the diabolical machinery was put into action to bring our beautiful country to the ground. The very heart of Russia, her very mind is injured by the venom brought across her boundaries by her enemies. Coöperating with Lenine and Trotzky, the government of Germany strove to poison the very conscience of the Russian people. But she, my Motherland, bore up against even this trial. The mind and conscience of a great people will never die! They already awaken to a new and better life. The enlightened Russian people will come to freedom and democracy.

Russia has rendered great services to humanity by carrying on her shoulders the defense of Europe from Asia. She took those burdens from the shoulders of other European peoples, and gave them the opportunity to continue in safety their progress, remaining herself for centuries the sentinel of civilization. Now when these historical services, and even the recent enormous Russian sacrifices in the War with Germany are forgotten, Russia has the right to present her account to mankind.

This is the first reason for making my appeal to the American people. And if you ask me who it is that has authorized me to make it, I answer that it is my seventy-five years of life among my people, who have confidence in me, and my fifty years of struggle for the freedom, the honor and the welfare of my Motherland. I am authorized by my anxiety to see her happy, by my fear to see her future endangered. And proud of that love, proud of the confidence of my people, I appeal to you, citizens of America, and remind you that there, far away, lives a true and honest democracy ready to pursue her way side by side with you, if you desire it.

Do you ask me why I especially address my woes and sorrows to you? It is because we, Russians, regard you as a people that have always cherished their liberty, that have always held high the standards of Democracy, that have never stood for despotism and oppression. And also, because many times have we heard from you words of friendship, words

that give us Russians the hope to see in you faithful brothers, always ready to aid us in the hour of our hardships

This hour has come. And I, the old nurse of my beloved, suffering child, I come to tell you, friends, about its sufferings. Great are these sufferings, and undeserved. It would be a great sin to leave Russia alone, her bleeding wounds unattended. While we lived through all the horrors of war, paying ten millions in casualties, of whom three millions are dead and about a million disabled for life, your sufferings in this war were comparatively small. Never did the enemy trample your soil, never destroy your towns, never burn your villages, never cut down your forests and gardens, never violate your daughters, never shoot thousands of your innocent citizens, never force on you a civil war with blood, robbery and slaughter.

The United States does not count her war-orphans by the millions, and, she is happy in that she is sure of her future. Her children are growing up without witnessing atrocities and degradation. May the security and the happiness of the American people be blessed forever! My friends, he who has much must give much. From the very beginning of the history of this country we see her people possessed of a high degree of culture and spiritual enlightenment; we see in them fighters for liberty, defenders of human dignity. We see in the people of this country the eldest brethren of the Russian people, and we hope they will stretch forth their hands to us without pride, unselfishly, bringing moral and material aid.

Of what nature should this aid be? What are the immediate needs of the Russian people? Our greatest, deepest, most immediate need is the creation of conditions under which the Russian people will be able to convoke an *All-Russian Constituent Assembly*. Russia will never be quiet and satisfied until her representatives, freely chosen by the entire population, will establish a Constitution for the State, will lay the foundation for a stable, democratic government, insuring laws that accord with the will and desires of the Russian people. The demand for a Constituent Assembly was one of the main

aspirations of the Russian Revolution. It was on the eve of its realization when the Bolshevist revolt, in November, 1917, tore out of the hands of the people the beautiful possibility to make laws for themselves, to trace the path for their future, to construct a new life in accordance with the interests of the masses, to strengthen peace and insure the common welfare. The Constituent Assembly, elected by the entire Russian people on the basis of universal, direct, equal and secret suffrage, was dispersed by the Bolsheviki with bayonets.

A year ago our Allies, together with the devoted and proven friends of the Russian people, could have created the conditions necessary for the convocation of a Constituent Assembly. The opportunity was lost, and our masses, simple-minded, naive and credulous, tired out by their past misfortunes, became a prey to the base and rapacious instincts of selfish, ambitious and merciless people. Under the circumstances, Russia faces a long and cruel struggle with all the evil which has entered her life. She has to suffer all the pains inevitable in the conditions of a people clearing its way to a better future. Many opposing forces bar this way; they check the normal course of events and make the people suffer and suffer more in their struggle to find the right issue out of the insurmountable chaos.

The world is curious to see the outcome of this deadlock, the issue of this conflict of passions, theories, and aspirations, the conflict between the people striving for a brighter life and the hideous treachery handicapping the great people.

There is no doubt that Russia will be able to find the right path, but her pains, her bloody sufferings will be known only to the millions of Russian mothers and the millions of our other innocent martyrs, our orphans. Flooded with tears and blood, Russia moans and cries out to the world. She is a living body, and her tortures cannot be looked upon cold-bloodedly as an extraordinary, never-before-witnessed experiment in social evolution. She is alive, and every pore of her body is shedding blood. The illness that was not stopped in time, I fear, may be prolonged for years. Only through persistent and incessant work and efforts can Russia be brought

to the normal conditions, to the position in which she found herself two years ago, after the glorious Revolution of March, 1917. In those days there was real freedom in Russia, and it seemed that our young country had every possibility for peaceful evolution and the free building of her future. I may assert, without exaggerating, that the March Revolution, perhaps the most beautiful and the most rational revolution in the world, was brought about, among other factors, through the efforts of the Party of Socialists-Revolutionists whose program for more than one-half century presents a basis for settlement which will satisfy the demands and aspirations of the overwhelming majority of the Russian people.

But, unfortunately, our people, young and inexperienced, could not at once find the true path, and, if abandoned by their friends, they may not find it for a long time. It is your duty, good friends, to aid them by your sympathy and your deeds. Especially by deeds, for our people, long deceived in their hopes, will give credit only to those who really and practically give them proof of their sympathy, to those who aid them to elevate and educate the new Russian generations, the millions of Russian orphans deprived of shelter and the most elementary means of education.

Russia is exhausted as a result of the war and the terrible civil strife. Her industries are disorganized, her means of transportation are destroyed, her educational system is at a standstill. Without industry, means of transportation and education, Russia faces conditions the horror of which cannot be expressed.

I undertook it as my task to present to the American people the tragedy of the people of Russia, in order that the American democracy might render us the immediate help necessary for reestablishing democratic order, for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly and creating conditions whereby peaceful progress may be possible in Russia. Recalling, with gratitude, the true friendship which the people of this country have shown me during my exile in Siberia, I appeal to the people of the United States to help my suffering people, the people of Russia.

II

Nothing has brought Russia so close to the rest of the world as the war that has just come to an end, and her Revolution which is still going on. The blood shed in the war has strengthened the alliance between Russia and the other democratic nations. Our great Revolution has made the ideas, sentiments and aspirations of the Russian people come nearer those of other democracies. The Russian people, by nature truthful and sociable, gladly stretch out their hands to the democracies of the world.

Endowed with honest souls and minds, they understand that their dark and burdensome history has retarded their political and economic development and has deprived them of the political and economic knowledge which other European nations and the Americans possess. Realizing this, the Russian people strive towards closer contact with other nations in order to learn from their older brothers who are more advanced in science and culture.

In speaking of the Russian people, I have in mind the masses. These are the people whom I know well, in their various customs and different walks of life, for I have spent among them half a century of my mature life, sharing their joys and sorrows.

I have come in contact with peasants, laborers, soldiers, criminals in prisons; with people of the Greek Orthodox Church, and of the different sects, in their hidden shrines; with tribes whom civilization has hardly touched, of whom there are many in Russia; with beggars, orphans, cripples, who stroll about in the villages; with tramps who fill the piers of our harbor-cities, and lastly, with great souls, who, in protest against human hypocrisy, renounce the life of sin and leave the world to dwell in the forests and deserts.

With all these people I have had intimate talks, and we understand each other. The masses of the Russian people had and still have confidence in me, and this confidence, which I greatly value, entitles me to talk in the name of the Russian people, as I have said before, without any formal authorization.

Leaving Russia, I told the peasants that I was going to America to present to the Americans the present situation in Russia. Their reply was a unanimous outcry: "Go, and ask them to help us in our misfortunes. We cannot help ourselves." Indeed, it is hard for the Russian people to overcome their difficulties unassisted. They cannot tackle the reconstruction of their country, not because of physical incapacity, but on account of spiritual embarrassment. During the past few years my nation has suffered many unusual shocks; its great hopes have ended in bitter disappointments. It is, therefore, not surprising that the people are somewhat at a loss, and their ideas and feelings confused; that having lost firm ground, they are wavering.

Realizing their condition, the Russian people, who are simple, frank and sincere, confess that at the moment they lack definiteness in the pursuit of their aims. Trusting in human willingness to help one another, they are ready to ask the democratic nations, and especially the Americans, to help them. America's democratic tendencies are known to them, as well as the fact that the American people have fought for their own and other peoples' liberty.

The Russian people know that it is one's duty to pay all debts and return services rendered one in time of need and difficulties, and they know also that their country is large and has hidden treasures. They know, too, that she needs a free and stable government in order to bring her wealth to the surface, for their own benefit and that of others.

In order to put in operation our unemployed resources, we, Russians, ask the Americans to help us increase the efficiency of our railroads and reestablish our destroyed industries. Americans, come to Russia! Do not hesitate to invest your capital, and right on the spot convert our raw materials into all kinds of products. Right there in Russia and in the bordering regions you will find a ready market in which to sell your products profitably, both for you and for us. Russia is a vast country, but, unfortunately, little developed. She affords great opportunities for your enterprises, and your energy will find an outlet there for a long time.

Russia has been on the path of European civilization for half a century. She has long ago familiarized herself with the demands and customs of Western Europe, and while acquiring new ways and habits, has been getting further and further away from her old methods of satisfying her economic needs. At first essentially a country of home production, she had during the past decades turned to capitalistic production in almost all her branches of industry. For two or three generations her inhabitants have abandoned their trades and home production to sell their labor in factories and plants. During the last few years Russia numbered more than 3,000,000 industrial workers, and during the war about the same number had adjusted itself to the production of war necessities. Russia maintained a fighting army of 12,000,000 soldiers and 8,000,000 additional people for special service and hard work connected with the maintenance of the army. Moreover, if we add the number of men and women who worked in factories and plants manufacturing war articles, and if we take into consideration that the grown-up population throughout Russia was busy supplying food and clothes for the above-mentioned twenty-five millions engaged exclusively either in fighting or war work, we can easily understand that no time or hands were left to take care of the needs of the civilian population of the country.

During the three years of the war the economic system of the country, which had hardly begun to develop and grow, weakened and began to break down. Our railroads and the rolling-stock were all worn out. Not only the passenger and freight trains were very slow and worked under difficulties, but also our postal and telegraphic service lacked its former efficiency and reliability. Factories and plants, employed in war productions, no longer supplied the market, and the meagre stock of various products had become exhausted while the factories were producing only war necessities. As a result, up to the time of the March Revolution of 1917, prices of commodities had risen one hundred per cent. As early as 1916, agents of various commercial firms and simply speculators had come to us in Yakutsk (Siberia) to look for whatever we had of manufactured articles and groceries in order to ship

them to Central Russia, where they could resell them at very high prices. That same year, while being transferred from Yakutsk to Irkutsk, *i.e.*, from the North to the South, I met on my way children and women driving transport and post-office wagons in the severe cold of the winter, for all the men had gone to war.

Contemporaries of the world war can testify to the fact that our vast but childishly undeveloped country has borne heavy sacrifices of life and wealth to defend justice and humanity against their enemies. Exhausted and bled white, Russia for the time being has become the prey of criminal demagogues, but she is still young and rich, and her natural resources—coal, iron ore, and all other metals, her forests and waters, are just as abundant as ever. However, all these riches are underground and it requires hard labor and much capital to produce them and convert them into useful articles. It requires all the modern machinery and implements. The machinery in the Russian plants and factories, worn out even before, are now completely used up and there is no hope that our industries may soon be able to resume production without help from abroad.

It is evident that Russia must be assisted with capital and with professional experts in order to restore her industries and to bring her transportation system, both on land and water to a proper development and efficiency. Simultaneously with the development of our natural resources, we must come to a proper use of our enormous man-power by enabling the village population, which constitutes more than 80 per cent of the entire population of Russia, to employ its time profitably during the long, cold winter.

In order to render Russia this kind of assistance, the Americans should get in touch with the Russian Zemstvos and coöperative organizations wherever these exist, for they at present actually represent the masses of the people. These organizations, established and conducted by the people themselves, will no doubt be glad to receive the assistance of a friendly nation and turn it to good use.

Economic, technical and financial help from the outside is indispensable in building up Russia as a free, democratic and thoroughly organized State. But, at this moment there is still another problem of great importance, and this is the problem of rendering Russia cultural help. The three years of war with Germany, during which we have suffered not less than ten million casualties, of whom three million were killed, and the horrors of the civil war started by the Bolsheviki, who have covered the country with tens of fronts and have established a regime of starvation where thousands fall in the streets daily—all these misfortunes in Russia's life during the past four and a half years have resulted in a situation whereby we have 4,000,000 orphans, helpless children, deprived of shelter and paternal care. These 4,000,000 children present a problem not for Russia alone, but for the entire civilized world. These children must be brought up and educated for the duties of citizenship, and they will be a powerful factor in building up a free, happy, democratic Russia. But, if they will be left to themselves, a great number of them will die, and the rest, probably the majority, growing without shelter and care, may in the future poison the life not of Russia alone, but of the rest of Europe and probably of the entire civilized world.

If Russia for the time being were not destroyed as a State, she would be able to care for her children herself. There are millions of war-orphans in other European countries which have participated in the great War, but these countries are organized, their governments are paying war pensions, they have normal legislatures which will undoubtedly take up and solve in a satisfactory way the problem of raising the fatherless generation. But Russia is destroyed, and therefore we must appeal to the world. It is not charity that I am appealing for; I am appealing for brotherly help. All our misfortunes, even the curse of Bolshevism, are the consequence of our participation in this war. We entered it under the inefficient and despotic regime of the Tzar, industrially and culturally undeveloped, less than any other nation of Europe prepared for a modern struggle. But, for three long years, covering

the battle-fields with millions of our graves, we stood at our posts defending justice and democracy, and our present ruin is the consequence of our readiness to give up everything for the rule of democracy in Europe. During the three years our armies have saved the Allied cause at many critical moments. Finally German militarism has been beaten, and Russia is in ruin because she has sacrificed her youth, her wealth and her enthusiasm to make the victory over Prussianism possible.

It is the moral duty of the democratic nations throughout the world to help raise and educate the fatherless children of Russia! I appeal to the great American people to render us this help, knowing their friendship and brotherly affection for the people of Russia. For this purpose I have come to this country.

I visited the United States fourteen years ago, and since then I have heard and still hear the Americans expressing friendship for the Russian people and willingness to help them in their difficulties. If these expressions are not mere words intended to console us in our grief, but sincere sympathy resulting from an understanding that it is the duty of a progressive people to help backward nations in their development so that mankind may progress more or less evenly, with nations living in friendship one with the other; if they are the result of an understanding that the ignorance of one country endangers the peaceful development of other countries—then my hopes and the hopes of my countrymen will be realized. We will be assisted in our hard and weary work with financial help; with skilful hands to teach us different trades; with noble characters possessing steadfastness, who will set before us the example of a life of labor and achievement, a life which does not fear privation and hard work.

Russia has enough land on which to erect homes for children, with schools, work shops, and agricultural departments. There is also enough material with which to erect the necessary buildings. However, we need capital to buy school furniture, the equipment of workshops and agricultural estab-

lishments. This we cannot obtain in Russia. All equipment for school-houses and school-yards, together probably with many skilled and patient teachers, we have to get from friendly America. Money is needed mainly to pay the laborers and employees.

Naturally, the difficult problem as to the conditions under which and in what surroundings 4,000,000 children can be given full maintenance and instruction cannot be solved at once. It will require millions of dollars and a great number of people to train the fatherless youth of our nation. However, as the saying goes, "Without a beginning there is no end." It is our duty to make a beginning as soon as possible and thus give a clear illustration of what can be done in caring for the well-being of our growing generation, of our young, future Russia.

I would suggest beginning as soon as possible for I do not doubt in the least that in this work we will have the sympathy and support of our democratic coöperative organizations and Zemstvos. These institutions are naturally very much interested in the education of the fatherless children and will be glad to see a beginning which might serve as a model for their own undertakings. There are already in Central Russia and in Siberia regions which are protected against disorders and destruction and where you can live quietly and establish settlements for children.

Citizens of America! You must not forget that in rendering such essential assistance to Russia as caring for her fatherless children, you perform a double act of service. You give your means and energy, and besides, in erecting shrines of education for the human soul and body, in establishing standard institutions for education on a basis of coöperative work and mutual aid, you will remind mankind of its duties and show us how to employ most beneficially our energy and abilities. You will point out that educating the people is the first obligatory task, the neglect of which has caused misfortune not only in Russia, but also in Europe, and undoubtedly all over the world. If you will study more closely the conditions of life of the majority, you will see that these conditions

are adverse to the happiness of the human soul. You will see that conditions created by our prejudices have estranged people to such an extent that people related by blood, speaking the same tongue and having the same religion, are strangers to one another. Everybody suffers silently, in loneliness, nobody cares what happens to the other.

During the past unhappy year we had a chance to experiment along the line of my proposed settlements for children. When famine began to drive thousands of the population from Petrograd, good people took thousands of poor children to the East and to the South where they could find food and shelter and, by living in the open air, recuperate. Every settlement consisted of several hundred children living with their teachers.

A month had hardly passed and the children, who had begun to associate on the way, were all absorbed in the interests of the big family. The older girls and boys acted as protectors and supervisors of the younger children. During my stay in Ufa in September of 1918, when the invasion of Bolshevist troops was expected, the arrival of the soldiers caused a few of these colonies to remove from the country to the city. The removal had to be carried out in haste and, as cold weather had set in, it was impossible to spend the night in the open. Then the older children came to me to tell me of the difficulties connected with the removal. They said: "We are big enough and can spend the night in the open, but we have many little ones with us; they can by no means be left out-of-doors in the cold. We have no winter clothes with us; we have nothing with which to cover them."

The children did not know that precautions had been taken and that their supervisors, together with the local authorities, were arranging some shelter for them. Of their own initiative they had elected the delegates who had come to me to present the troubles of their big family. Nobody spoke of his personal privations; their anxiety centered about the safety of the others. After their affairs, according to them, had been settled favorably, they brought me a present of two little rabbits. This was the children's dearest possession.

Their supervisors, people intensely devoted to their duties, cried bitterly in telling me of the hardships which the children had to endure in the places used for "fronts." However, they cried with joy in telling how quickly the children learn to care for themselves and to share responsibilities in living and working together.

Such colonies of starving children were also formed near the Ural Mountains. There they also quickly grew into one family, devoted to each other, caring for general needs and working efficiently.

I find the region of the Urals, especially the district of Cheliabinsk, particularly well suited for the founding of the first settlements for orphans. This vast region of Western Siberia is well protected against disturbances and has localities convenient for settlements. The fact that the city of Cheliabinsk is the centre of the coöperative peasant organizations, is also an advantage. Though we cannot figure much on the financial assistance of our coöperative societies, on account of the general poverty in Russia, their sympathy and interest in the problem of educating the children will no doubt be of great help. Our Zemstvos of the provinces and districts of the Ural region will also be interested in the undertaking and will help us as far as possible. At any rate, the first settlements, established on a firm and rational basis, will serve as an illustration as to how to deal with the 4,000,000 orphans and how to conduct the education of children in general, in order to raise for the country, instead of weak and helpless creatures, people who will be able to further conditions under which the feelings of brotherhood will be part and parcel of our daily existence.

Help us to realize this plan, my friends, Americans!